

Dependent Origination

Becoming Familiar with the Impersonal Process of Dependent Origination during your meditation session and experiencing immediate Karma.

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Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center
Annapolis, MO

The following sutta demonstrates for us the form of a deductive pattern of reasoning used by the Buddha in order to figure out the true nature of things and HOW they work. It teaches us how 11 of the 12 links work in the process of Dependent Origination as phenomena arise from any of the sense doors. This helps us to understand Karma as well. It leaves out ignorance, which means, 'not understanding the 4 Noble Truths'. By studying this we learn about the Four Noble Truths for ourselves. Other suttas discussed 5, 7 or 9 links when going over the meditation process with the monks.

Concerning Karma, remember:

“What you do in the present moment, dictates what happens in the future!

If you can Recognize the movement of mind's attention fast enough and Release, Relax, Re-smile, and Return over to your object of Meditation to re-center and then Repeat this observation process again, you will notice that the tension and tightness that is the root of the suffering gets less and less. This is reaching the cessation of suffering! Karmically speaking, when you release you get relief! This is an action and reaction or in this action the ceasing of a process action of continuing in the circle of D.O. ! Check this out for yourself.

Nidanavaggasamyutta

Introductory note:

The following discourse is an examination of the teaching of the Impersonal Process of Dependent Origination. If one is following the Sutta instructions for meditation with Bhante Vimala you have heard by now the definitions for Meditation and Mindfulness. Just remember to observe/notice the movements of mind's attention as it moves from object to object. Then continue to Recognize the movements when they begin, Release whatever arises, Relax the excess tension and tightness that is left over in mind and in body, then Resmile and Return to the object of meditation (Breath or Metta) and Repeat this again. Gradually mind will get sharper and sharper and one will see more and more.

The reading of this sutta will help one to grasp the series of links in D.O. more clearly and to understand what happens if one lets a feeling go as it is arising earlier and earlier in the process. Being guided in the practice to learn the links clearly and to use the meditation to notice how they each manifest as they arise; the characteristics of each like, one comes to see also the very impersonal nature of this process. One learns exactly how to notice an arising phenomena and then Release earlier and earlier until you let go at the root of suffering: CRAVING.

The series of links themselves are a very practical, applicable study tool and teaching tool. Observing D.O. can be applied to any arising phenomena at any sense door and investigated for the period of that event. One watches it in the broad sense, of course, and then gradually, with practice, sees the finer more subtle movements. As one continues this investigation, mind evolves into a new habitual tendency of letting go of that which was so bothersome in the past. One is releasing tension that led to stress, worry, fear, hate, and a lot of restlessness. One begins to realize that these things can indeed cease to arise anymore due to 'our own volitional action' as we deny them our attention and just let them be. As we do this, our perspective begins to change to an impersonal perspective and gradually one sees what is actually happening more clearly. This is like finally being allowed into the editing room of a movie film to see the individual frames! For the first time one is seeing the motion picture called PEACE.

This discovery leads us onward to true personality change and it is a change for the better as we begin to understand HOW things actually do work. People around us will notice as fear and doubt fall away as tranquility and contentment take their place. We begin to see for ourselves what is going on and this process is truly not a part of (ourselves). The process is IMPERSONAL. This is a real relief! It makes one SMILE more easily and laugh inwardly at how we had been caught by this fro so long in a dreamstate of living. Now, finally, as we begin to let go. We live more clearly.

The ditto marks have been taken out in the translation of this Samyutta Nikaya sutta which was done by Bhikkhu Bodhi. The full text has been restored to read for better understanding as we examine it. The discoveries you will make during this exercise can be very important for you. So do try and read it through a few times to reach a clear understanding. Each time, following the reading, go and sit and take a closer look for awhile in meditation. Sit for at least ½ hour each time. OK?

May you all reach Nibbana quickly and easily in this very lifetime.

May you all keep smiling too. J

Sister Khema
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Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center
Arcadia, MO

SN 12:51

Nidanavaggasamyutta

VI. Suffering (or the Tree) from the Samyutta Nikaya Volume 1

Translated by Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi [Wisdom Publications]

51 (1) Thorough Investigation

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Savatthi in Jeta grove, Anathapindika's Park. There the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus!"

"Venerable sir!" those bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

"Bhikkhus, when a bhikkhu is making a thorough investigation, in what way should he thoroughly investigate for the utterly complete destruction of suffering?"

"Venerable sir, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, take recourse in the Blessed One. It would be good if the Blessed One would clear up the meaning of this statement. Having heard it from him, the bhikkhus will remember it."

"Then listen and attend closely, bhikkhus, I will speak."

"Yes, venerable sir," the bhikkhus replied.

The Blessed One said this:

"Here, bhikkhus, when he makes a thorough investigation, a bhikkhu thoroughly investigates thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] aging-and-death: what is the source of this suffering, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does aging-and-death come to be? When what does not exist does aging-and-death not come to be?'"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] aging-and-death: this suffering has birth as its source, birth as its origin; it is born and produced from birth. When there is birth, aging-and-death comes to be; when there is no birth, aging-and-death does not come to be.'

"He understands aging-and-death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of aging-and-death.

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of this birth, what is its origin,

from what is it born and produced? When what exists does birth come to be? When what does not exist does birth not come to be?"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] birth: this suffering has existence [habitual tendencies] as its source, [habitual tendencies] as its origin; it is born and produced from [habitual tendencies]. When there is existence, birth comes to be; when there is no existence, birth does not come to be.'

"He understands birth, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of birth.

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of this habitual tendencies [existence], what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does [habitual tendencies] come to be? When what does not exist does habitual tendency not come to be?"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] habitual tendency: this suffering has clinging as its source, clinging as its origin; it is born and produced from clinging. When there is clinging, habitual tendency comes to be; when there is no clinging, [habitual tendencies] do not come to be.'

"He understands habitual tendencies, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with their cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of [habitual tendencies].'

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of this clinging, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does clinging come to be? When what does not exist does clinging not come to be?"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] clinging: this suffering has craving as its source, craving as its origin; it is born and produced from craving. When there is craving, clinging comes to be; when there is no craving, clinging does not come to be.'

"He understands clinging, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of clinging.'

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of this craving, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does craving come to be? When what does not exist does craving not come to be?"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] craving: this suffering has feeling as its source, feeling as its origin; it is born and produced from feeling. When there is feeling, craving comes to be; when there is no feeling, craving does not come to be.'

"He understands craving, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of craving.'

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of this feeling, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does feeling come to be? When what does not exist does feeling not come to be?"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] feeling: this suffering has contact as its source, contact as its origin; it is born and produced from contact. When there is contact, feeling comes to be; when there is no contact, feeling does not come to be.'

"He understands feeling, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of feeling.'

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of this contact, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does contact come to be? When what does not exist does contact not come to be?"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] contact: this suffering has the six sense bases as its source, the six sense bases as its origin; it is born and produced from the six sense bases. When there are the six sense bases, contact comes to be; when there are no six sense bases, contact does not come to be.'

"He understands contact, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of contact.'

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of these six sense bases, what are their origin, from what are they born and produced? When what exists do the six sense bases come to be? When what does not exist do the six sense bases not come to be?'"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] the six sense bases: this suffering has mentality/materiality as its source, mentality/materiality as its origin; it is born and produced from mentality/materiality. When there is the mentality/materiality, the six sense bases come to be; when there is no mentality/materiality, the six sense bases do not come to be.'

"He understands the six sense bases, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of the six sense bases.'

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of this mentality/materiality, what is their origin, from what are they born and produced? When what exists do mentality/materiality come to be? When what does not exist does mentality/materiality not come to be?'"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] mentality/materiality: this suffering has consciousness as its source, consciousness as its origin; it is born and produced from consciousness. When there is consciousness, mentality/materiality comes to be; when there is no consciousness, mentality/materiality do not come to be.'

"He understands mentality/materiality, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with their cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of mentality/materiality.'

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of this consciousness, what is its origin, from what is it born and produced? When what exists does consciousness come to be? When what does not exist does consciousness not come to be?'"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] consciousness this suffering has volitional formations as its source, volitional formations as its origin; it is born and produced from volitional formations. When there are volitional formations, consciousness comes to be; when there are no volitional formations, consciousness does not come to be.'

"He understands consciousness, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of consciousness.'

"Then investigating further, he thoroughly investigates thus: 'What is the source of these volitional formations, what are their origin, from what are they born and produced? When what exists do volitional formations come to be? When what does not exist do volitional formations not come to be?'"

"As he thoroughly investigates he understands thus: 'The many diverse kinds of suffering that arise in the world [headed by] volitional formations this suffering has ignorance as its source, ignorance as its origin; it is born and produced from ignorance. When there is ignorance, volitional formations come to be; when there is no ignorance, volitional formations do not come to be.'

"He understands volitional formations, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to that is in conformity with its cessation. He practices that way and conducts himself accordingly. This is called a bhikkhu who is practicing for the utterly complete destruction of suffering, for the cessation of volitional formations.'

'Bhikkhus, if a person immersed in ignorance generates a meritorious volitional formation, consciousness fares on to the meritorious; if he generates a demeritorious volitional formation, consciousness fares on to the demeritorious; if he generates an imperturbable volitional formation, consciousness fares on to the imperturbable. But when a bhikkhu has abandoned ignorance and aroused true knowledge, then, with the fading

away of ignorance and the arising of true knowledge, he does not generate a meritorious volitional formation, or a demeritorious volitional formation, or an imperturbable volitional formation. Since he does not generate or fashion volitional formations, he does not cling to anything in the world. Not clinging, he is not agitated. Not being agitated, he personally attains Nibbana. He understands: 'Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.'

"If he feels a pleasant feeling, he understands: 'It is impermanent'; he understands: 'It is not held to'; he understands: 'It is not delighted in.' If he feels a painful feeling, he understands: 'It is impermanent'; he understands: 'It is not held to'; he understands: 'It is not delighted in.' If he feels a neither painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands:

'It is impermanent'; he understands: 'It is not held to'; he understands: 'It is not delighted in.'

"When he feels a feeling terminating with the body, he understands: 'I feel a feeling terminating with the body.' When he feels a feeling terminating with life.' He understands: 'I feel a feeling terminating with life.' He understands: 'With the break-up of the body, following the exhaustion of life, all that is felt, not being delighted in, will become cool right here; mere bodily remains will be left.'

"Suppose, bhikkhus, a man would remove a hot clay pot from a potter's kiln and set it on smooth ground: its heat would be dissipated right there and potsherds would be left. So too, when he feels a feeling terminating with the body, he understands: 'I feel a feeling terminating with the body.' When he feels a feeling terminating with life.' He understands: 'I feel a feeling terminating with life'. He understands: 'With the break-up of the body, following the exhaustion of life, all that is felt, not being delighted in, will become cool right here; mere bodily remains will be left.'

"What do you think, bhikkhus, can a bhikkhu whose taints are destroyed generate a meritorious volitional formation, or a demeritorious volitional formation, or an imperturbable formation?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there are utterly no volitional formations, would consciousness be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no consciousness, would mentality/ materiality be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no mentality/materiality, would the six sense bases be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no six sense bases, would contact be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no contact, would feeling be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no feeling, would craving be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no craving, would clinging be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no clinging, would existence be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no existence, would birth be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"When there is utterly no birth, would aging-and-death be discerned?"

"No, venerable sir."

"Good, good, bhikkhus! It is exactly so and not otherwise! Place faith in me about this, bhikkhus, resolve on this. Be free from perplexity and doubt about this. Just this is the end of suffering."

Please write to us about your meditation experience .

Email: bhante4u@yahoo.com OR sisterkhema@dhammasukha.org

There is also a discussion group at www.dhammasukha@yaoogroups.com

Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center
Anathapindika's Park
8218 CR 204
Annapolis, MO 63620
Phone: (573) 546-1214

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[Portions of the text of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi were used here by permission from Wisdom Publications. We encourage all students to eventually purchase both the Majjhima Nikaya and the Samyutta Nikaya translations by Bhikkhu Bodhi for their sutta studies here at the center. The meditation is taught predominantly using the English words chosen in his translations as it is considered to be the most workable translation available to the modern world.]